has been set up in the Department of Drinking Water Supply to examine various emerging issues and challenges in the rural drinking water and sanitation sector and suggest measures to tackle the new challenges which *inter alia* include review of activities and the contribution of international and bilateral agencies and recommend action of possible areas of their activities to increase the impact of their limited support to help the efforts of the Ministry/Mission and recommend better coordination mechanism for improved interventions for increasing regional and international collaboration, and new mechanism for betterment of the partnership with bilateral and multilateral agencies, civil society, NGOs/CBOs, private sector, State Governments, R&D institutions and PRIs.

Expansion of NREG Scheme

†379. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a)whether decision has been taken for further expansion of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in the country;

(b)if so, the number of districts in the country where this scheme has been implemented; and

(c)what is the estimate amount of money required for implementation of this scheme after expansion and the amount distributed up to September during 2007-08 and the number of persons likely to be benefited by the end of the year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) Yes, Sir. Government has decided to extend NREGA to all the remaining rural districts in the country including Union Territories with effect from 1.4.2008.

(b)200 districts were covered in the first phase with effect from 2.2.2006 and 130 districts were covered in the second phase in the financial year 2007-08. The remaining 266 districts have been included in the third phase of implementation of the Act from 1.4.2008.

(c)NREGA is demand driven and not an allocation based programme. A National Employment Guarantee Fund has been established for providing funds to the States for implementation of the Act. Provisions are made in the budget for implementation of the Act on the basis of funds utilized by the States and also on the basis of demand for work in the previous year. For the current financial year, a budget provision of Rs. 12,000 crores was made for implementation of the Act. Up to September 2007, a sum of Rs. 6798.97 crore had been released by the Centre to the various states. NREGA is demand driven. Adult members of any rural household may apply for employment under the Act subject to an over all ceiling of 100 days of employment in a financial year per household. Therefore, no targets can be fixed for providing employment under the Act.

Misuse of funds meant for Employment Guarantee in Chhattisgarh

†380. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether case of misuse of funds meant for National Rural Employment Guarantee in the State of Chhattisgarh and some other States have come to light;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.